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ACTION ARA-01

RELEASED IN PART  
B6, B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D)

|      |        |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| INFO | LOG-00 | ACDA-15 | AMAD-01 | CIAE-00 | C-01    | DODE-00 | HA-09   |
|      | H-01   | INRE-00 | INR-01  | L-03    | ADS-00  | NSAE-00 | NSCE-00 |
|      | OMB-01 | PA-01   | PM-01   | PRS-01  | P-01    | SNP-01  | SP-01   |
|      | SSO-00 | SS-01   | TRSE-00 | T-01    | USIE-00 | /041W   |         |

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O 111253Z MAR 92 ZFF4  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9003  
INFO USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PM  
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 02666

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR  
TAGS: PREL, MARR, PGOV, US, CO, VE  
SUBJECT: [REDACTED]

ON THE POLITICAL CRISIS

B1, B6

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] BELIEVES THAT THE POLITICAL CLASS  
DIVORCE FROM REALITY WAS THE BASIC CAUSE OF THE COUP  
ATTEMPT. THE COUP ITSELF WAS LARGELY THE WORK OF THE  
RADICAL LEFT, WHICH THREATENS TO CONTROL A CONSTITUENT  
ASSEMBLY IF ONE IS CONVOKED. [REDACTED] BELIEVES THAT  
CAP MUST NAME A CREDIBLE CABINET AND "FORGET ABOUT THE

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OUTSIDE WORLD" IF THE CRISIS IS TO BE OVERCOME. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] ALSO THINKS THAT U.S. SUPPORT OF VENEZUELAN DEMOCRACY  
IS VERY IMPORTANT, BUT CAUTIONS THAT U.S. OFFICIALS SHOULD  
BE DISCREET IN THEIR PUBLIC STATEMENTS. END SUMMARY.

B6

B6

MEETING WITH MORALES PAUL

3. THE AMBASSADOR HOSTED [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] TO BREAKFAST ON MARCH 10.

[REDACTED] COMMENTED ON THE COUP ATTEMPT AND ENSUING  
POLITICAL CRISIS AS FOLLOWS.

B6

B1

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THE CAUSES OF THE COUP ATTEMPT

4. [ ] SAID THAT THE POLITICAL CLASS' DIVORCE FROM REALITY WAS THE BASIC CAUSE OF THE FEBRUARY 4 COUP ATTEMPT. OVER TIME, THE POLITICIANS HAD LOST CREDIBILITY OWING TO THEIR FAILURE TO KEEP THEIR PROMISES. THE LACK OF A SOCIAL PROGRAM ADEQUATELY COMPLEMENTING THE ECONOMIC REFORM PROGRAM ONLY GUARANTEED A NEGATIVE POPULAR REACTION AS IN FEBRUARY, 1989 (THE DATE OF THE "CARACAZO" OR LARGE-SCALE RIOTS).

B6

[ ]

B1

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE HAD BEEN A PROBLEM, THE AMBASSADOR CITED THE CASE  
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OF MEXICO, WHERE THE GOVERNMENT HAD SKILFULLY LINKED REFORMS SUCH AS PRIVATIZATION TO THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE.

6. IN RESPONSE, [ ] ADMITTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD MADE MISTAKES: EXCESSIVE CONCENTRATION ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TOLERANCE OF CORRUPTION, POOR COMMUNICATION (AS IN THE CASE OF CAP'S FOUR FLIP-FLOPS IN ONLY ONE WEEK ON THE QUESTION OF TERRITORIAL RIGHTS IN THE GULF OF VENEZUELA) AND DOWNRIGHT MISMANAGEMENT. CAP'S INITIAL CABINET WAS "STRANGE", [ ] CONTINUED, IN THAT IT JOINED TOGETHER FORMER GUERRILLAS/RADICAL LEFTISTS WITH TECHNOCRATS.

B6

B6

THE COUP ATTEMPT AND THE LEFT

7. [ ]  
[ ] ADDING THAT RADICAL LEFT GROUPS SUCH AS THE POLITICAL PARTY "CAUSA R", WOULD-BE GUERRILLAS SUCH AS RED FLAG (BANDERA ROJA) AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT HAD BEEN PROPAGANDIZING MID AND LOWER-LEVEL OFFICERS FOR SOME TIME BEFORE THE COUP ATTEMPT. THE ATTEMPT ITSELF, [ ] EMPHASIZED, SHOULD BE VIEWED AS A LEFTIST-INSPIRED PHENOMENON. (COMMENT: SOME TIES BETWEEN THE BOLIVARIANS AND THE LEFTIST FRINGE GROUPS CAN NOW BE

B1, B6

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REGARDED AS ESTABLISHED, BUT WE THINK [ ] OVERSTATED  
THE DEGREE OF LEFTIST INFLUENCE OVER CHAVEZ AND HIS MEN.)

B6

THE LEFT AND A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

8. CONTINUING TO ADDRESS WHAT THE LEFT IS UP TO, [ ]  
[ ] EXPRESSED FEAR ABOUT THE RESULTS OF A CONSTITUENT  
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ASSEMBLY, WHICH HE TERMED "ALMOST INEVITABLE" IN PRESENT  
CIRCUMSTANCES. A MAJORITY OF ITS MEMBERS, HE BELIEVES,  
WOULD BE LEFTISTS IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES WITH FORMER  
PRESIDENT RAFAEL CALDERA, CAUSA R, AND OTHER INDIVIDUALS  
AND GROUPS PERCEIVED TO BE ON THE LEFT. THE ESTABLISHED  
PARTIES, [ ] THINKS, WILL BE ABLE TO ELECT FEWER  
THAN 50 PERCENT OF THE DELEGATES TO SUCH AN ASSEMBLY. IN  
THAT CASE, HE ANTICIPATES, THE RESULT WILL BE THREE QUICK  
DECREES (DISSOLUTION OF CONGRESS, DISMISSAL OF THE  
PRESIDENT, AND A PARDON FOR THE COUP PLOTTERS), IN THE  
WORST CASE LEADING TO "CIVIL WAR."

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 CARACAS 02666

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR

TAGS: PREL, MARR, PGOV, US, CO, VE

SUBJECT: [REDACTED]

B6

WHAT CAP SHOULD DO

9. [REDACTED] SAID THAT CAP SHOULD SELECT A STRONG  
CABINET AND "FORGET ABOUT THE OUTSIDE WORLD" FOR A WHILE.

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[REDACTED] ADDED THAT HE BELIEVED THE CABINET WHICH WAS  
PROBABLY GOING TO BE ANNOUNCED LATER THAT DAY (SEPTEL),  
FEATURING LUIS PINERUA ORDAZ AS NEW MINISTER OF THE  
INTERIOR, WOULD BE POPULARLY PERCEIVED AS A STRONG ONE.

WHAT THE U.S. SHOULD DO

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10. [REDACTED] WHILE NOTING THE IMPORTANCE OF U.S.  
SUPPORT OF VENEZUELAN DEMOCRACY, DID NOT MENTION ANYTHING  
SPECIFIC WHEN THE AMBASSADOR ASKED HIM FOR SUGGESTIONS  
ABOUT WHAT THE U.S. SHOULD DO. [REDACTED] STRESSED THAT  
U.S. OFFICIALS SHOULD BE DISCREET IN THEIR PUBLIC  
STATEMENTS.

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